

THE BOOK CLUB OF CALIFORNIA

Quar-  
terly **NEWS**  
**LETTER**

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A. EDWARD NEWTON

THE PASSING the other day of A. Edward Newton must have brought a sense of personal loss to many thousands of men and women whose interest in books and in the joys of collecting received its first impetus from the writings of this persuasive and genial bibliophile. More perhaps than any other man in history he popularized and humanized the great writers of our own and earlier days and stirred a desire not only to own their books but to read and cherish them. Almost single-handed he brought

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about an amiable revolution in the field of his life-long interest. He found book collecting the hobby of the few; he made it the enthusiasm and delight of thousands.

The Club salutes the memory of a great collector, a warm friend, and a distinguished honorary member.



### ESSAY ON AUTOGRAPHS

LEST SOME be inclined to imagine that the autograph fiend is a comparatively recent phenomenon and that his development is somehow linked with the rise of the motion picture stars, we present the accompanying in proof that celebrities of an earlier day suffered from his importunities quite as much as do the Gables, Crawfords and Leighs of today.

*Brown House New York City N. Y. U. S. A.  
Tuesday Second December 1879*

*Indiscriminate avidity for the possession of autographs  
is one of the most extraordinary of the aberrations of  
the Human Mind.*

*Georgi Augustus Sala.*



*John A. Gomez Esq*



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George Augustus Sala (1828-1895), who penned this brief but eloquent comment on the subject, was an editor, war correspondent, lecturer and wit who through the '70s and '80s was as well known in the United States as in his native London. Sala covered the American Civil War for British newspapers, enjoyed the friendship of such widely dissimilar literary men as Charles Dickens and Ambrose Bierce, several times lectured in San Francisco, and lived to write a spirited two volume autobiography entitled "The Life and Adventures of George Augustus Sala."

His miniature essay on a certain type of autograph collecting reads as follows:

*Brevoort House, New York City, N. Y., U. S. A.*

*Tuesday Second December 1879*

*Indiscriminate avidity for the possession of autographs is one of the most extraordinary of the aberrations of the Human Mind.*

GEORGE AUGUSTUS SALA

*John R. Gomez, Esq.*



### FIRE AND OTHER POEMS

THIS MOST RECENT of Club publications, D. H. Lawrence's long-heralded book of poems, was completed early in September, at which time the event was duly announced to the members. It is still too early at this writing to judge the degree of enthusiasm with which the book will be received. The number of orders that have come in during the first few days after the cards were mailed is, however, enough in excess of the average to strengthen the opinion (which the Club has held from the beginning) that "Fire and Other Poems" is not destined to remain long in print. To date the orders on hand total 166

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copies, including some 75 copies for which members made reservations in advance of publication. Additional orders are arriving in substantial numbers daily and will no doubt continue to do so during the next week or two.

The publication was described in considerable detail in the June issue of the News-Letter and in the announcement recently forwarded to members. We repeat here briefly a few of the reasons why the book should have a particular interest to collectors of modern poetry, of first editions and of fine printing. It is the first publication of an important group of D. H. Lawrence poems. It contains a foreword by Robinson Jeffers and a note on the origin of the poems by Frieda Lawrence. It is printed, in red and black, from hand-set type (Goudy Modern) by The Grabhorn Press. It contains 54 pages, size  $9\frac{1}{2} \times 6\frac{1}{2}$  inches, and is bound in natural finish cloth with a label in black and gold. The price is \$3.50.

Members who have not yet secured their copies are reminded that only three hundred copies were printed and that the early return of their order-cards is the best insurance against possible disappointment.



### PACIFIC ADVENTURES

OF THE SIX PARTS of the 1940 keepsakes the following have been issued:

Part One: "The King of California: An Excerpt from an Eighteenth Century Account of Drake's Voyage Around the World," designed and printed by The Archetype Press, Berkeley.

Part Two: "A Description of the Southermost Part of California, from Captain George Shelvocke's A Voyage Around the World by Way of the Great South Sea," printed by The Grabhorn Press, San Francisco.



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Part Three: "The Wreck of the Wager, a Chapter from the Narrative of the Honorable John Byron." This pamphlet was produced by The Windsor Press, San Francisco.

Part Four: "The Sack of Monterey," an episode from Peter Corney's *Voyages in the Northern Pacific*. Printer: The Schwabacher Frey Company, San Francisco.

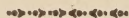
Two parts are yet to come. The first will reach members about October 15. Its title will be "The Manilla Galleons," and it will contain the chapter relating to the rich trans-Pacific commerce of two centuries ago, from George Anson's "A Voyage Round the World in the Years 1741-4." The chronicle of the Anson expedition, compiled by Richard Walter, chaplain of the ship *Centurion*, and first published in 1749, has long been regarded as among the most fascinating of all the 18th Century narratives of marine exploration and adventure. "This compilation of Richard Walter," states one authority, "has long occupied a distinguished position as a masterpiece of descriptive travel." "The Manilla Galleons" is being designed and printed by The Ward Ritchie Press, Los Angeles.

The sixth and final part, to follow in December, will present, under the title "The Death of Captain Cook," the story of the slaying of this eminent explorer on the Sandwich Islands in the year 1779, as told by Captain James King. This graphic, eye-witness account of the tragedy is from Volume III of "A Voyage to the Pacific Undertaken by the Command of His Majesty for Making Discoveries in the Northern Hemisphere . . ." published in London in 1784. Cook's slaying by the natives of the Islands marked the dramatic termination of the career of one of the greatest of the 18th Century explorers.

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The pamphlet will be designed and printed by The Eucalyptus Press, Mills College, California, and like the others will have a foreword by Earle V. Weller, editor of the series.

Six hundred and fifty copies are printed of each part of Pacific Adventures, and the number of complete sets is, therefore, limited to that number. About 560 of these are required to supply a set to each member, and from forty to fifty more are needed to furnish back numbers to new members who join during the year. The remaining sets (which number less than fifty) are reserved for sale to members who wish additional sets for gift or other purposes. A considerable number of these have been so purchased. The remainder are available, on a first come first served basis, and members who wish sets should apply as early as they conveniently can. Duplicate sets cost \$5.00. For obvious reasons, the parts cannot be sold individually.



### THE BENDER COLLECTION AT MILLS COLLEGE

By LOUISE FARROW BARR

EDITOR'S NOTE: *From time to time the News-Letter has published short accounts of a number of the outstanding California libraries, particularly those having collections of special interest to bibliophiles. The survey of the well known Bender Collection at Mills College (which is published without the knowledge of its donor) has a definite place in the series. Mrs. Barr, bibliographer and authority on the private presses of California, is curator of the Bender Collection.*

IN 1920 ALBERT M. BENDER, book lover and art patron of San Francisco, presented six rare books to the



Mills College Library with the thought that perhaps they might prove the nucleus of a collection which would stimulate the interest of faculty and students. Today the Albert M. Bender Collection of Rare Books and Manuscripts numbers more than 5000 items, and has a special significance not only to Mills College, but to all lovers of book arts and printing in the San Francisco Bay Region.

With a catholicity of taste and a true appreciation for art values, Mr. Bender has built up a collection admirably adapted for display purposes and for the needs of a growing college. Exhibitions are planned in coordination with the college curriculum and the college calendar of campus events, and to supplement, when possible, the chief exhibits sponsored by the Art Department. Certain other exhibits commemorate the outstanding anniversaries of the current year. No attempt is made to stress any one field of interest, but rather, by a variety of appeal, to stimulate the intellectual curiosity of the average student. Some idea of the contents of this collection assembled by Mr. Bender may be gained by the following partial list of exhibits held during the past five years:

Primitive books and specimen leaves of incunabula; French printing, German printing, Italian printing; the early English printers; books from English and American presses influenced by the work of William Morris; the Cobden-Sandersons and the Doves Press; historical documents; broadsides and printing specimens; Oriental books and prints; autographed copies and first editions; fine bindings; modern manuscripts; original letters; bookplates; dictionaries and encyclopedias; wit and humor; children's books; the Bible; Shakespeare; Dante; rare Americana; printing in Spanish America; the United States Constitution; books and manuscripts by famous

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Californians; the work of California artists with special reference to book illustration; Bret Harte; Ambrose Bierce and George Sterling; Jack London and Frank Norris; John Muir; William Butler Yeats; Ireland and Irish authors.

While it is obviously not the intention of Mr. Bender that the contents of this collection be used by members of the college group in the same manner as the general library collection, it is an undoubted fact that students do derive a certain intellectual stimulus from constant exposure to the treasures placed on exhibit. It may have been somewhat in a spirit of emulation that a few students especially interested in book-collecting, in January 1932, formed what is known as the Bibliophile Society of Mills College. This club, with a minimum of formal organization, endured through the depression years and persisted in its original purpose—that of building up worthwhile book collections among its members. These student collections are displayed once a year in the college library, and awards presented at the annual Book Day. Such exhibits and awards stimulate interest among the students as a whole in the discriminating choice of books worth owning. They become aware of the truth of A. Edward Newton's statement: "A hundred great books, or half that many, may well supply one with the intellectual stimulation and recreation of a lifetime."

The Bibliophile Society has been recently reorganized in an attempt to increase the membership for work on a practical project, rather than stress solely the collecting phase of its activity. The result has been two publications by the Society, both designed and printed by the Eucliptus Press. The first was issued in 1937—"Thirty Books and Manuscripts from the Albert M. Bender Col-



lection of Mills College." This list, with bibliographical, descriptive and literary notes compiled by the members of the Society and the curator of the collection, gives some idea of a few of the outstanding items in the Rare Book Room. Here, within a few pages, are described such books as the Kelmscott Chaucer and Beowulf, the Doves Bible, the Rudge printing of the Boswell Papers, the Edinburgh edition of Robert Burns, the Bruce Rogers Chanson de Roland, the Nash printing of Dante, the Bremer Presse Homer, the Grabhorn Press Mandeville, the Ashendene Fairy Queen, and first editions of Samuel Johnson's Dictionary and Sir Walter Scott's Kenilworth. Included also, to give a little glimpse into this veritable treasure-house, are facsimile reproductions of letters from Charles Dickens and Mark Twain, and one of Jack London's famous manuscripts, together with descriptions of Browning and Whittier autographs, and manuscripts of Bret Harte and O. Henry. Here, too, are early Aldines and Elzevirs and Estiennes, and books precious because of their exquisite bindings.

The second publication of the Bibliophile Society, just off the press, also pays tribute to Mr. Bender and his Rare Book Room at Mills College. It is the printing of a manuscript poem by Walt Whitman contained in the collection. Various drafts of the poem and a facsimile reproduction are given, together with a discussion of the different versions by Dr. Sidney L. Gulick, Jr.

While the Bender Collection has been a direct inspiration to the students of Mills College, it has also been an indirect source of benefit to neighboring institutions and visiting students. Constant calls are being made upon its resources in the fields in which it is especially strong, i. e., Californiana and Modern Printing. The convenience of

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having such material assembled in one room where it is not only visible but usable, appeals to the research scholar who is accustomed to the laborious task of visiting many widely scattered institutions and collections in order to assemble the data necessary for his work. While the physical limitations of the room as to size and comfort make it in no sense a "browsing room," it has proven a very adequate retreat for the faculty member or student working on some special problem, or for the neighboring scholar, or the casual visitor interested in the current exhibit.



### NOTES ON PUBLICATIONS

BELOW ARE a few random notes jotted down with the aim of shedding light on future publishing plans and, incidentally, of filling a couple of the back pages of the News-Letter:

Item: Christmas Book. For a good many years now the Club has brought out a new publication each December. This has been done on the theory that while during other seasons of the year members may greet the suggestion that they subscribe to a new publication with a certain amount of reserve (sometimes with a touch of downright coolness), if the invitation is timed to reach them on or about December 10 they respond with such enthusiasm that the Club's problem becomes that of apportioning a strictly limited number of books among a virtually unlimited number of customers. To be sure, in actual practice that situation has seldom developed in acute form. But it is nonetheless true that the books published in December do, by and large, sell faster and in greater number than others, and therein lies the reason why the custom of adding a new title to the list each December



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has been followed so long and is likely to continue. If the Club ever gets venerable enough to have traditions that will surely be one of them.

All this is preliminary to the statement that plans for the Christmas book of 1940 have been under way for some weeks and that the arrangements have been almost, but not quite, completed. It would be pleasant to outline here some of the book's attractions and the temptation to do so is strong. But the project is, as we have stated, not yet definitely settled and there is always the possibility (remote in this case) of last minute complications. So we merely state that plans for a Christmas book are nearly complete and that, barring unforeseen developments, the particulars will be forthcoming soon.

Item: Fall Clearance. The last issue of this quarterly contained a list of the Club publications remaining in print. An order card was included as a matter of convenience to those who felt the urge to respond promptly. The number of those who so responded was satisfactory though not sensational, and the result was that the reserve stock of two of the titles was exhausted entirely and that of the others substantially reduced. A list of the remaining publications-on-hand (most of which are priced far below their original cost) will be sent to any member who writes and asks for it.

Item: Department of Correspondence. A recent letter from one of our Eastern members, a collector who keeps in touch with what goes on in his field of fine printing and private press activities, states: "Yours seems to be the only one of the collectors' clubs that is now carrying on an active publishing program. During the past several years I don't recall having seen a single book from any of these organizations except yours and I doubt if any has

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been published. Some of the finest volumes on my shelves were published by the book clubs but in recent years fewer and fewer of them have appeared and now they seem to have stopped altogether. But you keep merrily on your way." Well, we will continue to keep on our way (as merrily as circumstances will permit) and meantime we will try not to feel too much as Robinson Crusoe did before he happened on the footprints.



### ELECTED TO MEMBERSHIP

THE FOLLOWING have been added to the roll since the appearance of the June News-Letter:

<i>Name</i>		<i>Sponsor</i>
Pryns Hopkins	Santa Barbara, Cal.	Oscar Lewis
Carlo S. Morbio	San Francisco, Cal.	Alfred Sutro
Charles R. Prilik	Chicago, Ill.	Oscar Lewis
Miss Barbara Shainwald	San Francisco, Cal.	Albert M. Bender
Edward DeWitt Taylor	San Francisco, Cal.	Oscar Lewis
Ralph G. Waite	Schenectady, N. Y.	Oscar Lewis

Membership now stands at about 560, some forty short of the maximum of six hundred. The Membership Committee seizes this opportunity to point out that there is room for another two score names on the roll and that in its effort to fill the gap it will welcome all the help it can get. The Committee is always delighted to receive letters of suggestion from members. The kind of letters that delight the Committee most of all are those that begin: "I wish to propose the name of——" It is to be hoped that members will keep in mind this odd enthusiasm on the part of its Membership Committee and that they won't fail to gratify it should the opportunity present itself.